

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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NEW ANTI-POISON RULES PROPOSED BY INTERIOR WOULD PERMIT CANCELLATION OF VIOLATORS' GRAZING PRIVILEGES

The Department of the Interior has proposed new regulations to restrict the use of poisons to control predatory animals on public lands.

Under one of the proposals, persons holding licenses or permits to graze animals on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management could lose the permits or licenses or have their grazing use reduced, if they use such poisons without written authorization to do so.

The notices are being published in the Federal Register. Interested persons will have until May 1 to comment upon the proposals.

Department officials noted that President Nixon, in an Executive Order dated February 8, 1972, banned the field use of poisons to control predators on any Federal lands. Also covered by the ban were chemical toxicants aimed at non-predators which could have secondary poisoning effects to any mammal, bird or reptile.

Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton stated at that time that predators will continue to be taken by other means, including trapping, shooting and denning. The objective of the Executive Order, he emphasized, was to halt the use of poisons but not to stop all Federal predator control programs, pending further action by Congress.

The Executive Order, and the proposed new regulations, give the Secretary of the Interior discretionary power to authorize the use of poisons in emergency situations, after consultation with heads of certain Federal agencies, if such use is essential to protection and safety of human life; to the preservation of an endangered wildlife species; or to prevent substantial irretrievable damage to natural resources having national significance.

Two other new rules have been proposed for comment by May 1. Also being published in the Federal Register, they would:

1-Formalize the President's ban on poisons to cover all lands managed by BLM, under the conditions described above; and

2-Make violation of State or Federal conservation laws or regulations a cause for revocation or reduction of a grazing license or permit if the violation concerns BLM grazing lands and is related to the grazing use authorized by the license or permit. The conservation laws and regulations referred to in this proposed new rule would include -- but not be limited to -- air and water pollution, protection of fish and wildlife, and uses of pesticides.